



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

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# News Release

## **ICE ARRESTS 9 CRIMINAL ALIEN GANG MEMBERS IN NATIONAL CITY**

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in San Diego fanned out across National City today, arresting 9 reputed gang members and 11 associates. The arrests mark the culmination of a two-month enforcement operation that is part of an ongoing crackdown by ICE on foreign nationals with ties to street gangs throughout San Diego County.

Assisted by officers from the National City Police Department, ICE agents targeted a notoriously violent National City gang whose members have been linked to drug trafficking, armed robbery, and illegal firearms possession. Officials believe 15 percent of the gang's estimated 500 members are foreign nationals.

“Street gangs are a breeding ground for crime,” said Michael Unzueta, San Diego ICE special-agent-in-charge for investigations. “ICE is committed to using its unique authorities to help dismantle these organizations and put an end to the violence they generate.”

The suspected gang members arrested today - eight men and one woman - are all Mexican nationals. Their criminal histories include past convictions for multiple firearm violations, drug-related offenses, and burglary. All of those arrested today were previously ordered deported, but had either failed to comply with that order, or had illegally reentered the United States.

Most of those taken into custody were arrested at their homes or the homes of their associates. One of the subjects has three prior arrests for violating a court-ordered gang injunction and convictions for possession of a dangerous weapon. The woman has a prior conviction for attempting to help a prisoner escape after smuggling a gun, tools, and drugs into a prison.

ICE's gang enforcement effort in San Diego is led by a team of investigators whose mission is to locate aliens who are subject to deportation based on their criminal convictions. In the last five months, ICE agents here have arrested more than 170 criminal aliens, including 58 gang members. In fiscal year 2004 (October 2003 through September 2004), ICE agents in San Diego arrested more than 500 criminal aliens, including more than 100 gang members and their associates. ICE deportation officers, working in tandem with investigators, have removed most of these aliens from the country.

#ICE#

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*